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NOTES OF THE MONTH.

THE Italian earthquake is an event of such appalling magnitude in the havoc which it has wrought, that we search the records of recent history in vain for a parallel. The long tale of suffering and death, which has filled the columns of the newspapers day by day, is one that those who dwell at a secure distance can only realise dimly in the immensity of its horror and blank dismay.

It is a remarkable fact that very little has been heard of the old theory of divine judgment. No doubt here and there some preacher has called in the antiquated Jewish belief to his aid, that these Sicilians must have been sinners above most men to incur so signal a proof of the divine displeasure. But such a plea does not ring true, and for the most part it has remained unspoken. The truth is that a silent revolution has taken place in the way we regard these things. We have discovered the vanity of pretended knowledge. In presence of mysteries which are too great for us, the truest piety is reverent silence.

At the same time it would be foolish to deny that these physical disasters create serious difficulties for the religious mind. They focus in one dramatic moment a problem which is always with us. One man killed by lightning and thousands of people overwhelmed by an earthquake—the problem is the same, though the appeal to the imagination is different. In the latter event it is its very magnitude which agitates and confounds us. But the wise man turns from the riddle of the universe to the riddle of his own heart, and to those spaces of experience which lie open to his view. Our need is not to find an answer to every question and an explanation of every difficulty, but for light to guide our feet in the way of goodness, for strength and courage to nerve us for the struggle and for love to fill the hunger of our hearts. This is what is given to us by God in the experience of personal religion. In the revelation in Jesus Christ the heart finds security. God's ways are often through clouds

and thick darkness, but this does not change what we have felt and seen and handled of the Word of Life.

But if this earthquake disaster has spoken to us in this way of the agony of all who suffer, and of the oneness of humanity in the mystery of weakness and suffering, it has also opened the springs of sympathy and goodwill, which are for the healing of our woes. The spontaneous sympathy of the whole civilised world, expressing itself in most generous gifts of help, has been most impressive. Already the Mansion House Fund exceeds £100,000; and we are glad to notice that the Lord Mayor of Belfast, though a little late in the day, has opened a fund for Ulster. We can all find a welcome relief for our feelings by supporting this local effort. Dr. Joseph Nelson is acting as one of the secretaries, a most suitable appointment in view of the service which he rendered to Sicily many years ago, when he took part in Garibaldi's victorious expedition.

During the past month the Archbishop of Canterbury has issued a most timely letter upon Temperance Work. He calls for a forward movement in personal service and influence. "One of the dangers which beset us," he writes, "is that so many people rely upon the administrative and legislative work of the civil authorities and Members of Parliament as our main force for the promotion of temperance. I believe, on the contrary, these efforts, even at the best, are as nothing compared with the effort which may result from the quiet, persistent, prayerful endeavour on the part of a vast multitude of individuals throughout the land to stem the evil in our homes and in social circles to which they belong."

It is pleasant to be able to announce that the Rev. J. M. Lloyd Thomas, of Nottingham, one of the ablest and most eloquent of our younger preachers, has accepted the invitation to preach the annual sermons on behalf of the Belfast Domestic Mission on March 21st. He will also be present and speak at the annual meeting on the following day.

WORK AND PLAY.

By Rev. S. H. Mellone, M.A., D.Sc.

V.

I SAID that "play" is one of our natural instincts, having its foundation deep in the real needs of our life, if by play we mean *recreation*—creating over again, enlivening or building up something that has suffered damage or exhaustion.

About two hundred and fifty years ago, when the men who were called Puritans were powerful in England and in the New England States of North America, the endeavour was made to put down all amusements. They looked upon the play-instinct as something not to be controlled or guided but to be rooted out. A favourite and cruel amusement of that time was "bear-baiting"; and it is said that the Puritans opposed and fought against bear-baiting, not because it hurt the bears but because of the amusement it gave the people. In still earlier times there was a widespread feeling that all the amusements, passions and pleasures of life were bad; and many of the best people retired into monasteries and convents, and left the common work of the world to be carried on by people of inferior character. Now all this was never wholly false; it was a great and dangerous exaggeration of something that is for ever true—the shame and disgrace of a life devoted all to play.

We can see the causes of the exaggeration, too. There was a grand meaning in Puritanism when it stood up firmly to fight against the licentiousness of King Charles' court; and there was a grand meaning in the protest made by Christians in earlier days against the gladiatorial shows and habits of licentiousness of the depraved and sinking civilization of Rome. But, none the less, the play-

instinct of man is a natural instinct; and the expression of it in means for amusement is not only natural but right.

There are two ways in which amusements are made sources of serious evil. One way is by mingling them with evils that are no essential part of them, such as drinking, betting and gambling, and worse things than these. The other way is by carrying them to excess: excess in hours, excess in energy, excess in outlay of money and means. Billiards, for instance, has been rightly described as "one of the most beautiful games ever invented, educating to hand and eye, a matter of skill and nice discrimination, beautiful in itself." But when there is a drinking-bar close at hand, and the element of betting is introduced, it becomes degrading in its whole nature and tendency—a place and a way to corrupt the men of the town. And "Bridge,"—a game full of interest and variety, exercising judgment and forethought—has become one of the worst gambling games of the time, through which not only the clubs but the homes of so-called "society" people have been made into gambling dens, and young people who do not know any better are enticed to play for stakes far beyond their means.

Even the vigorous open-air games, of which our people are so proud and so fond, have been greatly spoilt. In this case it is by the growth of the custom of playing for money or money's worth in "prizes." The desire for gain or profit, and the spirit of a vigorous game of strength and skill, are entirely inconsistent with one another; and I appeal to actual experience when I say that the spirit of gain cannot mingle with true sport without poisoning it.

What is called "professionalism" is another thing which is reducing many of our best games to a farce. A crowning example of this is seen when several thousand people assemble to watch two teams of paid men play their football for them; or when credit is given, say to a county, for matches won by a team of paid cricketers, some of whom may have a very questionable right to represent the county at all.

Games which afford a healthy outlet for friendly rivalry and emulation, and which even develop character in teaching us the importance of "playing the game" and "taking a defeat" in the right way, are ruined in such ways as we have spoken of, and made sources of evil.

We must repeat that even when cleared of all the harmful things which have been mingled with it, play is only a small part of life, though it is a necessary part. You have no right to waste, as thousands do, money and means and strength simply to gratify yourself in the way of excessive pleasure.

The right place of play in life ceases to be a very hard question to one who has grasped the principle to which we have appealed all through these articles. Remember what you are, what kind of possibilities and capacities lie, as it were, slumbering in you, what you might be if nobly developed. Remember the call and the claim of the world upon you. Remember that the great purpose of life is to live worthily as men and women; and that work and play are only means to serve, to purify, to life up and help on the manhood and the womanhood.

Unity Guild.—The December meeting was held in York Street Lecture Hall on Wednesday, the 16th, when a fairly large audience assembled to hear Mr. M'I. Cleland lecture. As usual the lecturer's matter was most interesting, and was made the more enjoyable by the display of some 50 excellent slides, many of which were taken from his own snapshots. The lecture was divided into three parts as follows: (1) Ely Cathedral; (2) Chateau Gaillard: the Home of Warriors; (3) Bits from my Camera." A word of praise is due to Mr. Geo. Hill, jun., for the excellent manner in which he manipulated the lantern.

In association with the opening of the new Unitarian Church at Ilford, Mr. William H. Taft, President-elect of the United States, has written from Hot Springs (Virginia) expressing thanks for the kind congratulations upon his election, and adding—"I have pleasure, as a life-long Unitarian, in sending my good wishes to your new Unitarian Church at Ilford."

LESSONS FROM THE BOOK OF ISAIAH.

[In connection with the Scheme of Systematic Instruction for the Sunday Schools of the Irish Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Association, 1908-9.]

VII.

(*Conclusion.*)

By Rev. H. J. Rossington, M.A., B.D.

IN our last lesson we considered the significance of the very important passage which is to be found in Isaiah lii. 13-15—liii., and tried to understand it as the prophet evidently intended it to be understood by those for whom he delivered his divine message. But we cannot rest content therewith. We are compelled to ask how it is that so many readers of the Second Isaiah's prophecies strangely ignore his obvious meaning, and give to his message a different setting. There are no words more familiar than some to be found in our special passages, especially in the fourth (*lii.* 13-15—*liii.*), yet how few Christians appear to ask themselves what it really was the great prophet tried to express, or, if they do ask such a question, their answer is little in accord with the actual circumstances of the prophet's own time. When they speak of the Servant it is not of Israel they think, but of Christ, and they give the impression that in doing so they are encouraged by the prophet. It is, therefore, necessary to account for this fact, lest our interpretation should appear singular or one-sided. Now, one thing must first of all be made perfectly plain. All that was said concerning our special passages represents no particular form of theology, nor was it an attempt to give support to any partisan position. It was merely an endeavour to find answers to the first questions asked concerning any great utterance, viz., "What does the speaker really mean?" "How does he desire his message to be understood?" That is to say, the earnest reader endeavours to put himself in the speaker's place, and think his thoughts after him. That we tried to do in our previous lessons, and what was said therein is in accord with the conclusions of many great Biblical scholars belonging to different schools of theology.

But then must be asked a second series of questions in the case of really great utterances such as those we are considering, viz.: "Is the truth or lesson enforced one of general significance?" "Can it be removed from the special setting given to it by the prophet and applied to other circumstances or events?" To such questions asked concerning our special passages we give an affirmative answer: Yes, a great truth like that of vicarious suffering, although signally illustrated by the prophet in the case of Israel, is not exhausted thereby. Again and again in human history not only has a nation like Israel suffered in the place of other nations, but individuals have frequently borne suffering on behalf of other individuals or of some cause of supreme interest to such. When this great truth became more and more recognised, and it was seen that the cause of religion owed much to those who suffered not so much for their own fault as for the faults of their fellows, it was quite natural that it made a deep impression upon the minds of thoughtful men. And when, in addition, the latter were primarily concerned with Christianity, and read the prophet's utterances from a Christian point of view, it was perfectly fitting to apply them to illustrate the self-sacrificing life of Jesus. This could, and can, be legitimately done, always provided it be understood that such application is thought of as that of later Christian time and not that the prophet had in view. But from the very beginning of Christianity there were reasons why men did not always distinguish between the two stages emphasised, *i.e.*, between the special and direct meaning of the prophet and the Christian application of his words in later times. Of such reasons it is sufficient to mention only one or two. In the earliest stages of Christianity the body of writings we call the New Testament had not come into existence. Both Christians and Jews were dependent upon the same

great literature comprised in the books of the Old Testament. So long as the latter were regarded as a special divine revelation to the Jews the Christians felt themselves at a great disadvantage, especially when points of difference became more and more emphasised and needed to be dealt with. The greatest of all such points of difference concerned Jesus and opinions held concerning him. Unless the Christian position could be justified by a reference to the sacred Jewish writings it must inevitably suffer in comparison with the Jewish position which claimed to find its strongest support therein. Even without such compulsion the earliest Christian preachers undoubtedly believed that the truths they proclaimed and the Master they served had the strong support of the Jewish writings. Thus Peter and Paul and Apollos made reference to the Scriptures, *i.e.*, to the Old Testament books, when engaged in proving to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ or Messiah (*See Acts xviii.* 28). But as the controversy became more and more acute it was usual for Christians to give increasing attention to the Scriptures from this point of view, and be desirous not so much of ascertaining the writers' primary meaning as of finding in their words allusions to, and anticipations of, the work and person of Christ. That tendency carried to an extreme in later times furnished the Christian comments prefaced to the chapters in the Authorised Version. From two points of view that was unfortunate. In the first place it made it appear that the Psalmists and prophets had little interest in, or concern for, the men and movements of their own day; in the second, it encouraged the reader to lose sight of his real object, *i.e.*, to understand the author's meaning, and made him approach his reading of Old Testament writings with Christian prejudices and presuppositions. It was inevitable that the prophetic writings received special attention from Christian interpreters and apologists. Since the prophets had frequently to utter words of warning and rebuke which their hearers disregarded, they looked to the future to justify their words. Coming events would make it plain that they were really expressing the divine will and purpose. Seizing upon this suggestion of incompleteness and unfulfilment in the prophetic writings, Christian interpreters pointed to Christ and to the events of his life as the final completion and fulfilment of the prophetic utterances. But, unfortunately, this gave prevalence to an altogether inadequate and one-sided conception of the prophet's function. This emphasised prophecy as the predicting or foretelling of future events. Nothing, however, could be more unjust than to think thus of the work of the great prophets. The latter were clear-sighted, courageous leaders and statesmen, familiar with and taking a prominent part in the events of their own day. It is to the latter that we must first of all apply their words. They had a living message to deliver and they succeeded in uttering that message in spite of every difficulty and every danger. To be a prophet, as an Isaiah or a Jeremiah understood it, was to speak on God's behalf to man, to tell forth a divine message to those amongst whom they lived and laboured. Whatever lessons we draw from their writings, whatever applications we make of their great principles, all such lessons and principles must be grounded in a sympathetic understanding of what they say, and of the moral and spiritual situation with which they deal. We must turn to their writings earnestly and reverently; we must place ourselves in the prophets' place and see matters from their point of view. To do that is to gain a truer idea of prophetic greatness and fidelity; it is to read their noble utterances as they ought, and as they fully deserve, to be read; it is to find, as we read, our reverence for God and righteousness so strengthened that at last we are each enabled to say, as Isaiah said when he heard the divine question: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"—"Here am I; send me." Thus to speak and thus to act is to do the work of a prophet.

EDWARD BUNTING AND IRISH MUSIC.

By S. Shannon Millin (*Barrister-at-Law*).

THE name of Edward Bunting will always be associated with the revival of Irish melodies. But in regarding his work in that direction we must not be carried away by pre-conceived ideas, which, utterly regardless of facts, are calculated to produce a false impression. It is, moreover, of the utmost importance at the present time, when the Celtic Renaissance—a movement which has my deepest sympathy so long as it does not degenerate into a mere plaything of sentimentalists—is looming large on the Irish horizon, that we should bear in mind the advice of Othello: "Speak of me as I am: nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice."

Bunting, who was a native of Armagh, spent thirty-five years in close association with Belfast life. At the age of eleven he presided at the organ of St. Anne's Parish Church, during the temporary absence of the organist in London, and although Bunting had no official connection with that church, he often officiated there as Ware's deputy. His first official appointment as organist was in 1806, when the Second Congregation introduced an organ into their Meeting-house in Rosemary Street. For eleven years he held that position, and during his term of office conducted a series of sacred concerts (October, 1813) in the Meeting-house, in aid of the Incorporated Charitable Society. The first of these concerts was miscellaneous, the second was Haydn's "Creation," and the third was Handel's "Messiah." On 10th May, 1817, the congregational musical committee recorded "Your Committee conceive it their duty to state that, having heard that Mr. Bunting had made, or was about to make, an engagement to play the organ in the Chapel of Ease, they thought it right to make enquiry respecting the fact, from which they find Mr. B. had made such engagement and entered upon the duty of it two months ago." For the two following years he acted as organist in the Chapel of Ease (St. George's Church), and finally left Belfast in 1819 to take up his residence in Dublin.

While still a youth of nineteen, he was selected, "as a highly trained musician," to take down the airs as played at the Belfast Meeting of Harpers in 1792, and he was "particularly cautioned against adding a single note to the old melodies." The object which the organisers of that movement had in view was to secure the ancient melodies as a criterion by which to judge the natural temperament and characteristic feelings of the Irish people. Such an object was worthy of the true spirit of patriotism, and the Belfast Reading Society subsequently showed its practical support by contributing £50 towards the publication of "the old Irish music" which "had been made at the late Meeting of Irish Harpers in that town." The book was published in 1796, without any acknowledgment of the financial assistance generously extended, and purported to be "a general collection of the ancient Irish music—collected from the Harpers

etc., in the different provinces of Ireland—and adapted for the pianoforte." Bunting does not seem to have been actuated by a strict observance of his instructions, as many of the melodies which he published are evidently corrupted versions. According to his own statement the harpers always played the melodies in the same keys, and their instruments were tuned in one uniform system, yet some of the airs played in Belfast were published in a key which it would be impossible to produce on an Irish harp as thus tuned, such as Carolan's Concerto, published in the key of E flat. The extraordinary success which attended the first two numbers of Moore's Irish Melodies, published in 1808, aroused the envy of Bunting, and in the following year he published his Second Collection, which differed from the First by having some of the tunes set to words. The title page stated: "Some of the most admired melodies are adapted for the voice, to poetry chiefly translated from the original Irish by Thomas Campbell, Esq., and other eminent poets." However interesting some of these songs may be as a literal translation from the Irish, they are deficient in the beauty and imagery which characterised many of Moore's, admitted by Bunting to be "the most beautiful popular songs that have perhaps ever been composed by any lyric poet." The only songs of Campbell which are admitted to be "written for this work" are two very indifferent productions, which shows that the title page was a complete misnomer. Bunting has charged Moore with adapting the tune to the words, and thus inverting the "proper order of song writing." If this be a serious charge from a musician's point of view, it is one from which Bunting himself is not entirely free. In his Second Collection he adapts a tune to the words of Dean Swift; another to "An Exile of Erin," which was written in 1800, long before Campbell had turned his attention to Irish melodies; and another to "Lord Ullin's Daughter," which treats of a subject foreign to Ireland.

Moore, in his Diary, refers to the one great object of Bunting's life, as "the connection of his name with the fame of Irish music." For the accomplishment of that object he seems to have been unscrupulous in withholding credit from others with whom he was associated, and envious of those who outstripped him in popularizing the Irish tunes. Had he been possessed of the creative genius of a musician, of which he has given us no proof whatever, he had ample opportunities for stamping his name indelibly in the great commonwealth of music. It is, however, a remarkable fact that while Ireland is rich in melodies, it is lamentably deficient in music. Music, especially in Ireland, is too often confounded with melody, which falls far short of the consummation of the divine art. The sweetest melody may be the direct expression of feeling, without embodying the inarticulate cravings and aspirations of the human soul. Just as the simplest tales have been transformed by the genius of Shakespeare into dramas of world-wide fame, so "the dear old sweet tunes" of Ireland, in the hands of Beethoven, have been converted into exquisitely coloured and highly finished musical productions. No greater tribute has been paid to the Irish melodies than that the greatest musical genius of his time gave them a setting worthy of their priceless beauty.

Mountpottinger.—The annual New Year Tea and Prize Distribution took place on Thursday, January 7th, when as usual there was a crowded gathering. Mr. H. Lamont Orr gave away the books earned by regular attendance during the past year, and in the course of the proceedings made a few remarks which were much appreciated by the children. The entertainment, which consisted of two little plays and a couple of action songs, was provided by the scholars themselves, who showed a surprising degree of excellence, and were a credit to Mrs. Hill and Miss Forrest, who had trained them. A distribution of gifts from a large Christmas Tree by a benevolent-looking Father Christmas concluded the proceedings.

ORDINATION AT KILLINCHY.

REV. D. J. WILLIAMS.

THE members of the Bangor Presbytery met on Thursday, January 7th, for the purpose of ordaining the Rev. David J. Williams, late of Belper, to the pastorate of the Killinchy Remonstrant Presbyterian Church. There was a large and representative congregation present, and the proceedings were commenced by the Rev. J. H. Bibby, of Ballee, who conducted the devotional exercises. The Rev. W. Weatherall, of Moira, preached the sermon from the text: "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak" (*Matt. xxvi.* 41). The defence of Presbyterian Church government was in the able hands of Principal Gordon, of Manchester, who delivered a most interesting and instructive address, covering a wide historical review of the formation of the first Presbytery and the progress of Presbyterianism since 1647. The usual questions to the minister and congregation were put by the Rev. J. A. Kelly; and the Rev. D. J. Williams gave a brief statement of the principles and aims guiding him, in taking up the work of the ministry in Killinchy.

He said:—In accepting the call to undertake the work of the Ministry of the Gospel in this place, I do so in the full assurance that the Christian interpretation is the one most meet for us and all men to follow.

It is because right living is so closely bound up with the Christian ideals that I wish to stand in this place as one definitely ranged on the side of the spiritual truths of the Gospel.

I regard it as a high privilege to be placed in a position whence I can recommend the truths of the Gospel to my hearers. I trust that I shall do this in a way to reach the understanding and the conscience of all.

It is my earnest wish that my interpretation of the Gospel will at all times be accompanied by sweet reasonableness; that I shall always be ready to give an answer to every one that asketh a reason for the hope that is in me, thus recommending myself to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

It will thus be seen that my belief is grounded in the Christian verities and that Christ's Gospel is the one I wish to abide by as my rule of life, and as the one to declare in my public ministrations. In no dogmatic spirit, but in the simplicity of the Gospel, and especially in its spirit, I shall rejoice to stand in this pulpit from Sunday to Sunday, to declare what I conceive to be Christ's messages to the human soul.

I believe that the Christian Scriptures contain the truths necessary to salvation, and that in consequence they should be received reverently and interpreted conscientiously, in order to meet adequately the ever-changing needs and circumstances of men.

I believe the ministry of this Gospel to be the noblest work a man can devote himself to. I have endeavoured, during the past fifteen years, in a humble way, to bear witness to the Gospel; and now, at the end of that time, I feel more convinced than ever before of the necessity to preach the Gospel.

The world is not yet saved. It still assumes many harsh and unlovely aspects. There are many schemes of reformation and regeneration proclaimed, especially these days, but until the Gospel of Jesus Christ shall have reached and entered every heart, not till then will salvation draw near and the Kingdom of God dwell among men.

As a humble witness to the power of the Gospel in the regeneration of men's lives, I wish to stand and be known during the term of my ministry in this Church of Killinchy. I trust that my witness will be a faithful witness, and that some signs of its efficacy may be manifested in the future.

As I intimated on Sunday, you do not wish me to stand for any dogma. You have not bound me in any way. We are all at one in maintaining liberty of conscience in civil and religious matters.

KILLINCHY: REMONSTRANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

You will expect, however, that I shall conduct the religious services in a devout spirit, and that I shall always endeavour to be at my best in leading the devotional exercises of my people.

I recognise, as a Unitarian Christian, one God, the Father of all, Who is merciful, wise and good; and shall emphasise the need of a pure and holy life before we can be true disciples of Jesus Christ, and be worthy to enter the Christian fellowship.

Rev. Thos. Dunkerley, B.A., Moderator, then offered the Ordination Prayer, consecrating the new minister to his work; and the members of the Presbytery and other ministers present gave the right hand of fellowship to Mr. Williams, as did also several members of the congregation. The charge to minister and congregation was given by the Rev. J. J. Magill, B.A., Rademon; and the impressive service concluded with hymn, and prayer by the Rev. Charles Thrift, Ballyhemlin, the newly-ordained minister pronouncing the benediction. At the conclusion of the devotional service the Presbytery and a numerous company of other ministers and laymen were hospitably entertained to luncheon by the Committee and congregation. The Schoolroom was set apart for this function, at which the Rev. Thos. Dunkerley presided, supported on his right by the Rev. D. J. Williams, Rev. W. H. Drummond and Mr. Osborne; and on his left by the Rev. Dr. Mellone (President of the Association), Principal Gordon, Rev. J. A. Kelly and Mr. S. C. N. Lowry. The usual loyal toasts were duly honoured, and Principal Gordon in a felicitous speech full of characteristic humour proposed the health and prosperity of the Rev. D. J. Williams in his new work, coupling with the minister's name the name of Mrs. Williams. The Principal referred in the course of his address to the early acquaintanceship he had made with Mr. Williams, who happened to be the Junior Student of the Home Missionary College when he (the speaker) commenced his duties as Principal. He also paid a splendid tribute to the long and devoted ministry of the Rev. John M'Caw when minister of that congregation, and said that if the ministry of Mr. Williams should prove as successful as that of Mr. M'Caw it would surely be a fortunate day for Killinchy. Mr. Williams, in responding, thanked all for their cordial welcome, and spoke of the great kindness he had already received from many who were anxious to extend to Mrs. Williams and himself the expression of a warm friendship. The Rev. Dr. Mellone, President, and Rev. W. H. Drummond, Ex-President, responded to the toast of the Association of Irish Non-Subscribing Presbyterians and Other Free Christians, proposed in happy terms by the Chairman. The concluding toast, "Prosperity to Killinchy Congregation," was proposed by Mr. S. C. N. Lowry, of Downpatrick, to which Mr. Williams responded, paying a well-deserved compliment to the Rev. J. A. Kelly, for many kind services rendered both to the congregation and himself. The Rev. J. A. Kelly added a few words, and the proceedings terminated. In the evening a very successful Soiree was held to welcome Mr. and Mrs. Williams. Tea was dispensed by several ladies of the congregation, after which the Rev. J. A. Kelly presided. Addresses were delivered by the Chairman, Rev. D. J. Williams, Rev. Thos. Munn (Greyabbey), Rev. Geo. J. Slipper (Moneyrea), and Rev. John M'Cleery (Raloo). An interesting programme was well rendered by friends from

Newtownards, and the members of the Choir, under the direction of Miss M'Ilwrath. The hall was filled to overflowing, and there was no doubt whatever that the cordiality of the welcome evinced in the whole of the day's proceedings was expressive of high hopes for a prosperous future for Killinchy congregation under Mr. Williams' guidance.

REPORTS.

Belfast.—First Church.—The Annual Tea and Entertainment in connection with the Sunday School was held in the Central Hall on January 20th. There was an unusually large attendance when after tea the chair was taken by the minister (Rev. H. J. Rossington, M.A., B.D.) A hymn and prayer opened the proceedings, followed by a brief address, in the course of which stress was laid upon the importance of the Sunday School, not merely for its own sake, but also because it served to prepare the scholars for undertaking more responsible duties in the Church. Mr. Cleland was then called upon to distribute the prizes to the successful scholars. In so doing he emphasised the fact that three brothers of the name of Pink had for the second year in succession obtained every possible mark, having been neither absent nor late. Following upon the prize-giving and a thoughtful address by Mr. Cleland, came a delightful entertainment, consisting of two plays, for which the scholars had been very carefully trained by Miss F. Davidson, and Mrs. Rossington. The first was entitled "Grannie's Picture," while the second was a Hallowe'en Play. Both were admirably given, and indicated very conscientious rehearsing. Separate mention should be made of the graceful dancing in the first of the plays and the very effective scenic arrangements in the second. Between the two performances a very pleasant interlude was provided by Miss Marjorie Hill, who sang "The Birdies' Ball," exceedingly well. A hymn and Benediction brought a most successful gathering to a close.

All Souls' Church, Belfast.—On Monday, January 4th, a most successful entertainment was given in Rosemary Hall to a party, numbering about 300, of children and old people from the Union Workhouse. There was an admirable display of the cinematograph by Mr. Erskine Mayne, and Madame Ellie Johnson sang several songs with her usual bright charm of manner. As the company left the hall presents of tea, fruit and sweets were distributed.

Crumlin.—On Wednesday evening, January 6th, a very successful Social was held in the Masonic Hall in connection with the proposed new National School which will be managed by a lay committee representative of all the Protestant denominations of the district. The programme consisted of music, recitations and speeches; and the meeting was ably conducted by J. H. M'Connell, Esq., in the chair. A number of ministers of the district were present and spoke, and a marked feature of all the speeches was the broad spirit in educational affairs advocated. Expressions of gratitude were made to the committee and past ministers of the Unitarian Church, who for a period of about eighty years provided the public with a school-building, and ably managed the school affairs to the satisfaction of all concerned.

Greyabbey.—The Annual Sunday School Tea Party and Congregational Social was held in the Church on Tuesday evening, December 22nd, 1908. There was a very fair attendance, notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather. The chair was occupied by the minister, Rev. Thomas Munn, and the whole of the programme was contributed by the teachers and scholars. After the hymn, "Welcome, welcome, is the greeting," a plentiful supply of tea and its accompaniments was served by the teachers and members of the Choir. Justice having been done the varied and interesting programme was then proceeded with. The various items were exceedingly well rendered by the following: Masters D. Barnes and W. Gibson; Misses Jennie Patton, Jennie Mawhinney, Gertie Thompson, G. Gibson, J. Barnes, Mary Gibson, Mr. R. Warnock, and the Chairman. Miss Amy Barnes was the efficient accompanist. So well were the items received that encores were demanded and willingly responded to. The musical part of the programme having been concluded, the prize distribution took place. Each scholar received a book prize; and two scholars who had not missed a single Sunday during the year received a special book prize. A heavily laden Christmas Tree supplied all the children with toys or useful articles of some kind. A vote of thanks to the Misses Amy Barnes and Mary Gibson for training the children, and to the children themselves for giving the items, was moved by Mr. W. Taylor, seconded by Mr. C. H. Carson, and responded to by Mr. R. Warnock. In the course of the evening some conversation took place concerning the Bazaar which is to be held in the coming summer. The reports given by the various workers were mostly of an encouraging nature. The singing of "Auld Lang Syne" terminated the meeting.

Holywood.—On Thursday evening, January 14th, the Annual Soiree for the members of the Sunday School was held in the Schoolroom of the First Presbyterian (Non-Subscribing) Church. Tea was at 6-30, when there was a large attendance of children; and later in the evening they were joined by a great many parents and other members of the congregation. After tea there were musical items contributed by Miss Winnie Cowser and Messrs. Harvey and Shannon. An attractive little musical play called "A Nursery Rhyme Entertainment," was done by nineteen children, under the management of the Misses

Patterson, with Miss M'Cammon as accompanist. The following took part: the Misses Hilda, May, Elsie and Norah Patterson, Alice and Lucy Moore, Mabel and Kathleen Harvey, Maggie and Anna Graham, and Masters Harry Moore, Ivan and Willie M'Crum, Willie Harvey, John M'Nair, Colville Patterson, Terence and Charles Grainger, and Morgan Graham. As usual, there was a splendid Christmas Tree with presents for everybody, and these were distributed by Father Christmas, the part being done by Mr. Niall Nelson, who was very well got up, and who looked a most genial and jolly old gentleman. The whole entertainment went off most successfully, and every one agreed it was one of the best children's soirees ever held. The singing of the National Anthem concluded the evening.

Moneyrea.—The Annual Christmas Party, in connection with the Sunday and Day Schools, took place on Saturday evening, December 19th, and was attended by a large company of parents and scholars. Tea was dispensed in the old Schoolroom, at which Mrs. Slipper, Mrs. T. J. Millen, Miss Maxwell, Miss J. Abernethy, Miss Miscampbell, Miss Hogg, Miss Minnis, Miss Kennedy and Miss Spence acted as tea makers. Messrs. T. J. Millen, Jas. Spence, W. Spence and R. Maxwell acted as stewards. After tea an adjournment was made to the New School, where a programme consisting of songs, recitations and dialogues was well rendered by the young people who had been trained by Mrs. Slipper. Special mention must be made of the services of Miss Turkington, Miss Boucher, Miss Kennedy, Miss Slipper, Miss M'Farlane, Miss C. Lappin, Misses S. Huddleston, C. Spence, Smiley, Jordan, Copeland, M. Clifford and C. M. Bryce; also Masters W. and J. Clifford, H. Hogg, J. Smiley, B. Slipper, R. and S. Turkington, J. Rainey and Lappin. Amusing dialogues were also given by the Misses Maxwell and Miscampbell and Mr. J. Spence. During an interval prizes for regular attendance at the Sunday School were distributed by Mr. A. K. Stewart, J.P., who gave a brief but practical address to the scholars. Mr. S. M'K. Turkington also gave an address. At the conclusion of the programme, the whole party returned to the Old Schoolroom, where a large Christmas Tree, given by Mr. A. Spence, and well laden with toys, was dismantled by Mr. T. J. Millen and Mr. Slipper. After a few games the party concluded with the singing of "Auld Lang Syne."

Rademon.—Our Total Abstinence Society held its annual Social Meeting on the first evening of the New Year. The attendance was so large that the Schoolroom was uncomfortably crowded. The proceedings began at seven o'clock. Tea was served by the young people themselves and seemed to be much enjoyed. A miscellaneous programme followed, not the least interesting item being a dialogue, "The Ventriloquial Pawnbroker," given by some members of the Reciting Class. Amongst those who contributed music, recitations, etc., were Misses Robinson, Abbeyview (3), Sarah Robinson, Dunn (2), Jamison, Alexander, Calvert, Miller, Spence, Spratt, M'Veigh, Morrison (2); Messrs. Patterson, Steedman, Robinson (3), Spratt. An address was given by the Rev. J. J. Magill, who urged the claims of total abstinence, and invited the young men and young women to begin the year by taking the pledge. Fruit was distributed about ten o'clock, after which dancing was started and kept up till midnight. The singing of the National Anthem brought to a close the fourth meeting of the present session.

Templepatrick.—The children of the Day and Sunday Schools came together for their annual Entertainment in the Roughfort National School on Friday evening, the 1st January, and were largely supported by the presence of parents and friends. The blizzard and heavy fall of snow early in the week almost put an end to Christmas festivities in this part of the country, but even so a goodly company managed to gather, and a very pleasant evening was spent. Recitations by the scholars and songs for which they had been trained by Mr. Barnes, their teacher, occupied very pleasantly the first part of the programme. Other songs were sung by the minister and Mr. Barnes, and special mention must be made of three Japanese action songs by Miss Turner and the Misses Bessie and Agnes Barnett, in costume, which called forth great applause. The treat of the evening was a beautiful Christmas Tree, and just as the last candle was lighted who should walk in but Santa Claus himself, staggering beneath the weight of a large sack, laden with all kinds of good things! Then there was fun! For upwards of an hour Santa and the children enjoyed themselves "rightly" and it was with great regret they said goodbye to him. Refreshments were served during the evening, and a very pleasant meeting was brought to a close with the Benediction.

Birth.

WORTHINGTON.—December 23rd, at Lisbawn, Hawthornden Road, Knock, the wife of the Rev. Joseph Worthington, of a son.

Death.

FERGUSON.—January 2nd, at Clough, Park Road, Catherine, widow of the late Henry Ferguson.

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